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INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY  
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RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 3852  
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 2761  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2121  
RUEHBAD/AMCONSUL PERTH 0897  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 001207

SIPDIS

DEPT. FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, DRL, DRL/AWH  
NSC FOR EPHU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/20/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KJUS](#) [PREL](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: FORMER GENERAL ARRESTED FOR ACTIVIST'S MURDER

REF: A. JAKARTA 279  
[1](#)B. JAKARTA 173  
[1](#)C. JAKARTA 112  
[1](#)D. 07 JAKARTA 3189  
[1](#)E. 07 JAKARTA 2311 AND PREVIOUS

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Classified By: DepPol/C Stanley Harsha, for reasons 1.4 (b+d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: On June 19, Jakarta police arrested retired general and former Deputy of the Indonesian National Intelligence Agency (BIN) Muchdi Purwopranjono for the 2004 murder of human rights activist Munir Said Thalib. The arrest marks the first time a retired military general has been captured for involvement in a serious human rights crime, contacts said. Activists called it a step forward in Indonesia's fight against impunity. Suggested press guidance is in paragraph 9. END SUMMARY.

A NEW ARREST

[1](#)2. (SBU) The Indonesian government continues to press for accountability in the 2004 murder of human rights activist Munir Said Thalib. On June 20, retired general and former BIN Deputy Muchdi Purwopranjono was arrested for involvement in the murder. He will be charged with premeditated murder, with a maximum possible sentence of death. Muchdi is the first former general arrested for such a serious human rights crime, human rights activists told poloff.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Muchdi's arrest is the first in what activists hope will be a series of steps by the Indonesian government to investigate BIN for its possible involvement in the murder. Muchdi was tied to the murder by Munir's fact-finding team in [1](#)2005. Open testimony by a BIN official in the trial of now-convicted Garuda official Indra Setiawan revealed that Muchdi had frequent contact with and ordered payments to Pollycarpus Budihari Priyanto, the off-duty pilot sentenced to 20 years for Munir's premeditated murder (ref C). Two suspects were convicted for the murder this year: On January 27 Pollycarpus was convicted to 20 years for committing the murder (ref A). On February 11 former Garuda Director Indra Setiawan was convicted to one year for abetting the murder.

OTHER BIN SUSPECTS POSSIBLE

[1](#)4. (C) On June 13, contacts told Acting Pol/C that according

to a police source, police have evidence implicating another former BIN honcho. Police retrieved a letter signed by former BIN chief M. As'ad that assigned Pollycarpus to the flight on which Munir was poisoned. The letter incriminating As'ad had been mentioned in court testimony but had been lost (refs A, C). Police retrieved it from a BIN hard-drive, according to contacts.

#### ACTIVISTS' RESPONSE

¶5. (C) On June 20 Usman Hamid, lawyer for Munir's widow, told poloff the arrest came as a relief. The arrest was a significant achievement for rule of law in the country, he said. He expressed hope that international actors would maintain interest in the case until the masterminds of the murder were identified and prosecuted.

¶6. (C) Hamid expressed some concern that the case could be used for political interests leading up to the 2009 elections. Hendropriyono, BIN Chief at the time of Munir's murder, has connections with former president Megawati's Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P), and may be looking to protect himself from allegations against him or BIN relating to the murder, he said. Hamid said sources in Parliament (DPR) told him they are wary of Hendropriyono or other former generals who dislike President Yudhoyono trying to use the Munir case for their own political gain in the coming months.

¶7. (SBU) Muchdi himself may have political ambitions as well. He is vice chair of the Great Indonesia Movement Party (Gerindra), which supports former general Prabowo for president. Muchdi is known to be close to Prabowo, succeeding him as commander of the Army Special Forces in

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¶1998. Muchdi was dismissed that same year over the kidnappings of pro-democracy activists attributed to forces under his command.

#### GOOD NEWS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

¶8. (C) The arrest is a landmark in the GOI's commitment to pursuing the perpetrators behind the murder case that President Yudhoyono called "a test of Indonesia's history." It marks a coup for Indonesian law enforcement that the police arrested a former general and former deputy of BIN. The arrest underscores GOI's commitment to pursuing justice for Munir's murder. One senior advisor to Yudhoyono told DepPol/C that given Muchdi's connections, his arrest could potentially lead to implicating other senior former generals for past human rights crimes, were he to talk. That said, there is a long road ahead to ensure the legal process continues to produce results.

¶9. If asked about the arrest of Muchdi Purwopranjono as a suspect in the 2004 murder of human rights activist Munir Said Thalib, Mission recommends the following press guidance:  
-- The United States has closely monitored progress in bringing to justice the killers of Indonesian human rights activist Munir Said Thalib.  
-- We are encouraged by progress in the case and hope that the investigation ultimately results in full accountability for the murder.

HUME